

**SUGGESTED REMARKS**  
**Dr. Aye Aye Thwin**  
**Chief, Office of Health, USAID/Manila**  
**TB Partnership Forum Event**  
**March 23, 2007, 3:00 PM, PICC**

Undersecretary Ethelyn Nieto  
Dr. Yolanda Oliveros  
UN  
PhilHealth  
Other Donors  
TB Partners,  
etc

Distinguished friends and colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

"Magandang Hapon/Gabi sa inyong lahat." (Good  
afternoon/evening to all).

It is an honor to be here among you to participate  
in today's forum and stand amongst the  
distinguished TB partners to unite and discuss such  
an important topic - Philippine partnership to  
fight TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS.

Before I proceed, I would like on behalf of USAID  
to join our partners in commemorating World TB Day.

Throughout the last decade, the Government of the Philippines has intensified its efforts to prevent and control TB. The Department of Health confirmed its commitment for DOTS by announcing the TB Control Program as the number one health priority for the decentralized Local Government Units (LGUs) in 1998. Currently, the private sector's involvement has also increased in the past 5 years due to a number of PPMD initiatives implemented by the National TB program.

USAID works with governments and partners worldwide to save lives by increasing and strengthening treatment and cure of TB, improving drug quality and availability, training all cadres of health workers, providing laboratory supplies and equipment, and engaging communities and the private sector in TB care. USAID also supports the Philippines' effort to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS. We all need to be watchful of the inter-relationship between the high TB prevalence in the country and the potential explosion of HIV/AIDS.

USAID congratulates the DOH for organizing this forum to review the achievements of the Philippines Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) partnerships of national and local governments to improve health in the Philippines.

TB and malaria are diseases of the poor and HIV/AIDS is a disease of the marginalized segments of population. USAID is glad to see that partners are committed to reducing these diseases with the support of the Global Fund.

I would like to congratulate the members of the Philippines CCM, particularly the original 28 members representing the public sector headed by the Department of Health, and which has representations from the National Economic Development Authority, and the various departments of education, national defense, interior and local government and the Commission for Indigenous People; international agencies which include the United Nations and bilateral donor agencies; the

private sector including NGOs, research agencies and people living with AIDS (PLWA); organizations involved in public-private collaborations - all have been driving the Fund processes and adapting program development to emerging challenges.

The partnership that the CCM has established is providing an opportunity to its members to learn from each other and evolve accordingly. It is indeed a challenge to work cooperatively to attain the CCM shared goal of fighting TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS without losing the identity of the organization. Hence, the partnership is a major accomplishment of the CCM in itself.

USG, being one of the contributors to the Fund, "votes" on grants. USAID locally is asked to provide information about prospective grants as well as country performance (CCM, PR and sub-PRs) to help the Global Fund have a better sense of how grants are functioning on the ground.

Now that we have this great opportunity of working together with the Global Fund, we have to start thinking of sustainability. How do we work together to ensure that future efforts are carried out by locally mandated agencies and entities? Our efforts today should lead to a sustainable program that will guarantee to keep these three major diseases at bay. This is a crucial question we must confront.

Lastly, I would also like to pose a challenge to all of us in the CCM - that as the funding for project and activities increases, so should we be more vigilant in ensuring that the project implementers we give funds to are able to absorb their funding, that they are able to carry out their activities in a timely manner that benefits the Filipinos who are suffering from TB, malaria and HIV/AIDS. We owe it to the Filipino people, as much as we owe it to those countries which have made the Global Fund possible.

I thank you and wish you all good day.

"Maraming salamat po." (Thank you).

Clearance:

OH: EDespabiladeras (D)

AAThwin (D)

PRM: KDonahue (D)

OD : FDonavan (D)